

# In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Volume 2, Issue 7, March 28, 2003

## Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
Message from the Youth Mayor	2
Community Profile	2
Celebrating Black History at the James Gallery	2
DCPS Parent Guardian Conference Provides Opportunity to Underscore Education Commitment	3
New DC Convention Center Opens	3
District Activities	4
Community News	4
Upcoming Events	5

EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
OF THE MAYOR  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Penn. Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Phone: (202) 727-2980  
Fax: (202) 727-6561  
<http://dc.gov>

## Message from the Mayor

Last week, I presented my proposed Fiscal Year 2004 Budget and Financial Plan to the City Council. This year's proposed budget is the product of a lot of hard work and consultation with the Council and community leaders. I wish to thank everyone who worked so hard on this complex document.

Ten years ago, our city went through a financial crisis while other cities and states enjoyed steady growth and stability. Today, the nation is facing its biggest budget shortfalls since World War II, and states across the nation are struggling to balance their budgets while, at the same time, trying to meet the growing needs of their citizens.

But what our residents, Congress and Wall Street will see is that while the District is facing financial pressures just like other cities and states across the country, our proposed response is based on the highest standards of fiscal discipline and fairness.

Over the past six months, the District of Columbia has seen a ten percent drop in its revenues. Other state and city governments have faced these problems in different ways. Some have made severe cuts in education, child care, and social services. Others have tapped in to reserve funds and "rainy day" funds. Others are pursuing revenue gimmicks.

I have proposed taking a realistic and thoughtful approach, one that I believe strikes the appropriate balance between additional spending reductions and new revenues. This approach:

- recognizes and addresses the full magnitude of the problem;
- has the courage to say that one thing is a priority over another;
- identifies areas of low productivity and reallocates resources accordingly;
- preserves the core services of our government and protects the neediest among us while remaining true to the priorities that have been identified by our citizens; and
- calls on all members of the community to accept a fair share of the burden.

Solving a budget gap of a full ten percent is like operating on the spinal cord: You need to be extremely careful, because your actions will have far reaching effects all around you, and for many years to come.

So, in summary, this budget is focused on goals. In times of tight resources, some say you need to forget your goals and simply survive. But in fact, the opposite is true. We need to focus on those goals more than ever so that we can protect them and continue to make progress toward them. This budget includes great sacrifices, but they are sacrifices that are necessary to save the financial foundation of the city. This proposed budget is balanced without any expectation of additional help from the federal government. Although the national economy and federal policy may be at the root cause of many of our problems, our local elected leaders have to make the tough choices to solve those problems.

This budget makes those choices. However, that does not mean that the federal government should be let off the hook. Governors and mayors across the country, Democrats and Republicans alike, are demanding that the federal government stop imposing unfunded mandates, control the growth of entitlements, and provide some aid as we manage the current crisis. Now add to that the voice of the District, which shares all the challenges of a state, yet is prohibited from collecting revenue like a state, and has no vote in Congress.

In the end, part of the problem for the District is that the federal government requires us to deliver services (and therefore spend) like a state, but then prohibits us from collecting revenue like a state. This mismatch creates a structural imbalance between our revenues and expenditures, and continues to drive the District into insolvency. We keep that from happening by reducing services and delaying capital repairs, but that cannot happen much longer.

We need Congress and the President to realize they need to either allow us to collect revenue like a state, or assume part of the responsibility for supporting the city that supports them. For more information and for details on my proposal, visit <http://dc.gov>.



## AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

# Message from the Youth Mayor, Michael Clark

One of my priorities as Youth Mayor is community service. Every high school student in the District of Columbia is required to complete 100 hours of community service prior to graduating. This requirement is to encourage young people to leave a positive impact on their communities and to build a foundation for lifelong service.

On April 11 –13, the District will host the national kickoff for National Youth Service Day (NYSD) 2003. National Youth Service Day is the largest service event in the world, and last year over 5,000 young people from DC participated. For more information on National Youth Service Day or to get involved please contact Kimberly Flowers, Outreach Coordinator, DC Commission on National and Community Service, (202) 727-9461.

## Community Profile

### Ibrahima Mbaye

Ibrahima Mbaye, a native of Senegal and a resident of Ward 5, has been a dedicated volunteer for the District's Meridian International Center's International Classroom program for over two years. He says that he is like a Peace Corps volunteer, but instead of serving as an American abroad he is teaching America about West African culture.

When Ibrahima comes to a classroom to speak, he brings along historical, cultural, and traditional artifacts to show the students, including his own artwork. His specialty is West African cultures, traditions, and art; and, his presentations reflect his vast knowledge about West African history and his special ability to talk with children. Ibrahima has given 33 presentations to a total of over 600 students in District schools.

International Classroom is a community outreach program that prepares public school students in the District to function in an age of dynamic global change and worldwide interdependence. It provides cultural presentations that offer students and teachers a greater knowledge of international affairs and world geography, an understanding of different cultures and personal contacts with foreign students in their community.

Ibrahima came to the United States three years ago to study English and explore American culture. "I was amazed at how nice and polite all Americans are," Ibrahima said. He has recently married an American and plans to live here for years to come.

Ibrahima is the February adult winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, sponsored by the DC Commission on National and Community Service. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit <http://cnccs.dc.gov> for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.



Ibrahima Mbaye

## Celebrating Black History at the James Gallery

On March 15, I joined citizens and city leaders in celebrating Black History Month at the new James Gallery on Georgia Avenue. As we all know, Black History Month takes place in February. However, due to our snowy winter, the event was rescheduled for March.

The James Gallery is adding to the revitalization of the upper Georgia Avenue corridor by bringing fine arts to the Shepherd Park/North Takoma area. The gallery joined with Gateway Georgia Avenue Revitalization Corporation to celebrate its first Black History Month event.

The James Gallery will feature local emerging artists with significant contributions from black artists. James Gallery's resident artist and owner Michael Spears has been featured in Black Enterprise Magazine as well as several local publications. The gallery is named after his father.

I was delighted to participate in the opening of this wonderful gallery. Our city is developing an art "scene" in Upper Northwest Washington, thanks in part to the James Gallery. We are starting to paint a new look along Georgia Avenue — beyond fast food and liquor stores.



## DCPS Parent Guardian Conference Provides Opportunity to Underscore Education Commitment

On March 15, I was pleased to help host the annual District of Columbia Public Schools Parent and Guardian Conference at the University of the District of Columbia. It was a terrific opportunity to meet with scores of parents, guardians, teachers, students and community leaders.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: Parents are our children's first teachers, and they all have an integral role to play in the academic achievement of our youth. Likewise, community support is critical to a school's ability to serve its students and families.

Education has been and will always be one of my top priorities. I have worked with Councilmember Kevin Chavous to increase funding over the last few years, reversing a trend of disinvestment in public education.

Superintendent Paul Vance and the Board of Education have done fine work over the last few years to turn around our system. In my proposed Fiscal Year 2004 budget, I have worked very hard to "protect" the schools as much as possible during these fiscally trying times. Almost every other agency in the District is being forced to live within its existing budget, to forego pay increases and even to make programmatic cuts. Despite this harsh climate, I have maintained the DCPS per-pupil funding formula, providing a 2 percent inflationary adjustment, and funding for teacher pay raises.

As I stated in my inaugural address, my commitment to education has not wavered and will not waver. I remain committed to pursuing additional funding in the future.

## New DC Convention Center Opens

On March 29, I will help celebrate the opening of the new, spectacular Washington Convention Center. The opening of this new Convention Center symbolizes Washington's growth and comeback in recent years. Some people joke that our city bird is the construction crane. Certainly, this is an exciting time to live, work, and be a resident in our nation's capital.

The new center can attract as many 3 million people annually and can inject \$656 million into the District of Columbia's economy. Meanwhile, the center alone – by city projections – can inject as much as \$776 million into the metropolitan region on an annual basis. That's good news for our city. The Convention Center is more than a new building. It symbolizes a strong foundation for the future of our city, its residents, employees and economy.

The scale of this coming weekend's festivities befits the new Convention Center's majesty and symbolizes the good things it will bring to the District. We will encourage convention participants to bring their families to the nation's capital. In the new center, bookings already extend through 2007. Many of these shows would not have come without this center. In the existing Convention Center, October 2000 is considered the most successful month, with 34,200 attendees. In the new center, October 2003 already has a planned 38,750 attendees. Many shows in the new center are medical meetings, whose attendees average more spending per delegate than attendees for other meetings.

Consider a few facts about the new Washington Convention Center:

- It is 2.3 million square feet (or the Washington Monument lying on its side, twice)
- It has 36,000 square feet of registration space
  - 44,000 square feet of retail
  - 52,000 square foot ballroom (with 30,000 square feet of pre-function space)
  - 150,000 square feet of meeting space
  - 725,000 square feet of prime exhibit space

This new center is a symbol of where we've come, and also where we're going as a city.



## District Activities



Ruth Nadel, of the District's Commission on Aging, speaks with Mayor Williams during his meeting with advisors to discuss the budget on March 10 at One Judiciary Square.



Mayor Williams met with the Mayor of Istanbul, Turkey, Ali Gufit Gurtana, on March 18 in the Ceremonial Office at the John A. Wilson Building.



Mayor Williams joined a host of visitors for the Cherry Blossom Poster Contest on March 25. From left to right are: John B. Sparrow, Principal, Reed Learning Center; Michon Peck, Director of Student Affairs, DC Public Schools; Mayor Williams; Roxana Funes, "Best in Show" winner, 5th Grade student at Reed Learning Center; Darrell Williams, Art Teacher, Reed Learning Center; Minister Satoru Satoh, Japanese Embassy's Minister for Public Affairs and Julian Raby, Director, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution.



Mayor Williams and Council Chairman Linda Cropp watched a video conference presentation of the District's baseball "pitch" to Major League Baseball officials in Phoenix on March 20. Mayor Williams and Chairman Cropp had planned to attend the presentation but cancelled due to homeland security issues.

## Community News

- [Mayor Issues Statement Regarding Homeland Security](#)
- [Community Corrections Facility Siting Advisory Commission Releases Draft Report](#)
- [FY 2004 Proposed Budget and Financial Plan](#)

[View all News Releases](#)



# Upcoming Events

03/29	<b>Great American Cleanup Kick-Off</b> 9 am 14th and V Streets, NW <a href="http://cleancity.washingtondc.gov">http://cleancity.washingtondc.gov</a>
03/30	<b>Washington Convention Center Grand Opening</b> 2 pm Washington Convention Center Between 7th and 9th Streets, NW and N Street and Mt. Vernon Place
03/31	<b>Ward 3 Emergency Preparedness Community Meeting</b> 7 pm—9 pm Wilson Senior High School 3950 Chesapeake Street, NW
04/03	<b>Ward 6 Emergency Preparedness Community Meeting</b> 6:30 pm—8:30 pm Hine Junior High School 335 8th Street, SE
04/05	<b>National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade</b> 9:30 am—Noon Constitution Avenue, NW between 7th and 17th Streets
04/11	<b>National Youth Service Day Opening Ceremony</b> 10 am Orr Elementary School 2200 Minnesota Avenue, SE
04/14 thru 05/11	<b>Photography Exhibition <i>A Day in the Life of Africa</i></b> Union Station Great Hall 15 Massachusetts Avenue, NE

View the [Mayor's daily schedule](#)

